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10/561306
IAP20 Rec'd PCT/PTO 19 DEC 2005

International Preliminary Examining Authority
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Clamart, 19 April 2005

International Patent Application no. PCT/EP2004/006240
Applicants: Services Pétroliers Schlumberger et al.
Our Ref: WO 21.0995

Dear Sirs,

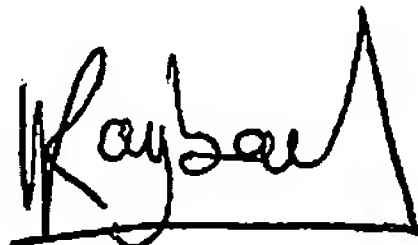
I refer to the Written Opinion dated April 20, 2005 and provide herewith arguments to overcome objections raised in said opinion.

Document US 4 467 835 describes a device for temporarily shutting off conduits that comprises a resilient sleeve expandable under powerful internal pressure and having a rubber wall comprising at least two superimposed plies. This document is perfectly in line with applicant's prior art exposure as in description of the present application page 2 line 23 to page 3 line 6. Therefore, as cited in D1, plies 8 and 9 are made of cords – as admitted for known devices in the prior art- and not of a "filter layer (...) possessing a structure made of a multitude of very fine fibers", as in the invention.

Result of such technical difference is improved abilities of the device according to the invention to impeach creeping of the material constituting the wall of the membrane in order to prevent it from passing outwards between the reinforcing strands under the effect of the pressure generated by the inflation fluid.

The applicants believe that this response addresses the issues raised by the examiner and request that a favorable international preliminary examination report be issued forthwith.

Yours faithfully,



Hélène RAYBAUD
European Patent Attorney